ATTILAN WESTERN DEFENSES
WE ARE BACKS AGAINST WALL AGAIN.
COSMO!
HAVE THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY COME TO ASSIST?
COSMO REGRET, LADY CRYSTAL. THAT THERE ARE NO MORE GUARDIANS OF GALAXY.

BUT COSMO WILL DO ALL HE CAN!
IT BEINK EASY TO TEEP-SENSE LADY CRYSTAL'S FEAR. FEAR FOR SURVIVAL OF INHUMAN RACE.

EASIER STILL TO TEEP RAGE OF HER HUSBAND, RONAN THE ACCUSER.
WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN READY! BLASTAAR WAS ALWAYS GOING TO UNLEASH A SNEAK ATTACK WHEN WE WERE AT OUR MOST VULNERABLE!
BUT WE WERE ALLIES UNTIL LAST WEEK!

LORD RONAN, HE TRULY LOVE HIS NEW WIFE. HE LOVE PROSPECT OF FUTURE LIFE.
HE IS BEINK SO AFRAID OF LOSINK THAT, HE CANNOT SEE WHAT IS OBVIOUS.
YOU COULD HAVE BEEN READY.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
COSMO NEEDS TO HAVE PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH RONAN THE ACCUSER AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY...

NAVIS KOANA FIVE.
TWO DAYS AGO.
"NOT INTERESTED."
BUT--
NOT INTERESTED.
COSMO NOT EVE--

CHANDILAR. CAPITAL WORLD OF THE SHI'AR IMPERIUM. YESTERDAY.
GLADIATOR! MAJESTOR OF THE SHI'AR!
THE NEXT ITEM ON THE COURT AGENDA IS A MEETING WITH THE ENVOY FROM KNOWHERE.
REALLY, COUNSELOR ARAKI? NOWHERE?
NO, MAJESTOR-- "KNOWHERE."

WHAT HE GOT WAS TEAM OF MISFITS AND OUTCASTS AND ALSO PSYCHOPATHS.
WHAT? COSMO LOVE GAMORA, BUT SHE PSYCHOPATH!
STAR-LORD, HE RECRUITED PEOPLE, THE BEST HE COULD GET AT TIME. THE ONLY ONES WHO BOTHERED TO LISTEN TO HIM.

THE REAL HEAVYWEIGHTS, THEY NOT MUCH INTERESTED IN PETER'S GREAT DREAM.
THE GUARDIANS, THEY PROVE THEMSELVES. THEY WERE NOT MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE AROUND, BUT THEY WERE BEINK MOST BRAVE.
SEVERAL OF THEM, THEY DIE FIGHTINK FOR STAR-LORD'S CAUSE.

I WANT TO BE CLEAR, THIS ISN'T A PERMANENT TEAM.
WE JUST AGREE TO ASSEMBLE WHEN NEEDED?
FIRST OF ALL, LET US SELECT AN ALTERNATIVE TO "ASSEMBLE."
WE ARE AGREED ON THE REMIT, GLADIATOR. WE WILL SIMPLY BE THE LAST RESORT.
THE ULTIMATE SANCTION.
IS GOOD.
SO LET COSMO SHOW YOU AROUND KNOWHERE, GET YOU USED TO LAYOUT.
THAT WAY, WHEN YOU GATHER FOR FIRST MISSION, YOU WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH AMENITIES.
CORTEX TRANSLOCATOR CHAMBER, CAFETERIA, RESTROOMS...
ALSO, WE CAN BE RUNNINK THROUGH PETER QUILL'S TO-DO LIST.
HIS WHAT?
LIST OF CONCERNS HE BELIEVED WERE STILL PENDINK WHEN HE WENT OUT FOR LAST TIME.
FIRST THING, IT WAS WHAT NOW. DEAR RAYS? NYET. DARE WREATHS?
DIRE WRAITHS?

MARVEL
AGE OF X
WHAT YOU KNEW WAS WRONG!
JANUARY 2011

AGE OF X FILES WITH MASTERMIND MIKE CAREY

MARVEL: For those new to Age of X, what's it all about?

MIKE CAREY: It's about the last few mutants surviving on planet Earth fighting a last-ditch – and a seemingly hopeless battle for survival against an army that's to all intents and purposes infinite. When we meet them, they've been fighting for three years and there's no end in sight. From the confines of Fortress X, they go out into the field each day to fend off the latest wave of attacks, with no respite and terrible attrition. This is against the backdrop of a world that's never known the X-Men, or any other mutant super team – a world that's not even familiar with the concept of mutant heroes. Disorganized, isolated and helpless, most mutants have been picked off one by one, along with non-powered bearers of the X-gene and anyone who stood up to defend them. This is the last fight, and it's entering its final phase.

MARVEL: We've seen alternate stories before, but this is something completely different than anything we've seen before—how would you differentiate it?

MC: In a way, that's a question that can only be answered by the story itself – or after the story itself. There's a lot more going on here than we initially see. We present a situation, but we don't explain how it relates to the normal Marvel universe, or where it diverged from it. And then, at a certain point, we do. The answer is – I hope and believe – a million miles away from anything that readers will be expecting.

MARVEL: You've got a large cast of characters. Which have been your favorite to write? Any surprises?

MC: I always love writing Rogue, Gambit, Magneto. I've loved writing Basilisk, and I think you'll see why when you learn more about him. You won't believe what's been done to him, and what he's become. Writing Frenzy as a hero was very cool: so was writing a darker, more worldly wise version of Pixie, and a version of Cannonball who's basically expanded into a leadership role not occupied – in this world, never occupied – by Cyclops. The coolest thing, in fact, has been re-inventing the characters, and exploring how this world might have twisted them out of shape without changing who they essentially are.

MARVEL: There are no X-Men in this world, but the mutants have a unique mission that brings them together. Can you tell us a bit about that?

MC: It's purely a matter of survival – both for themselves and for their race. In the Alpha issue, we see the raw beginnings of a sort of comradeship that hasn't really existed up to this point – the sense of unity, as the hunted loners come together and discover for the first time how much more they can be. Arising out of that, within the main story arc, there's a mission that has to do with finding out a truth that's been very well hidden, and then dealing with the appalling consequences. There's a sense in which the army outside Fortress X if far from being the biggest problem they have to deal with – and the threat to mutant survival is a small part of a much big ger threat.

MARVEL: We've also heard you've developed a pretty intricate mythology for this reality. How much of this will we see play out in AoX? Anything particularly shocking or surprising you can hint at?

MC: There's a backstory which is huge, yeah – and some of it we only get through hearsay, as stories that the mutants tell each other around the campfires or in the bars at night when they're resting up from battle. Part of that is the origin of Fortress X itself, which is pretty insane and another part is how the world got into this state, with anti-mutant forces ruling with an iron fist. Outside of that, we've also got the origin stories of the characters themselves, some of which we see in the Alpha issue, and the unexpected role that non-mutant heroes have played in the genesis of the Fortress and the survival of the mutants. It's a really intricate and rich tapestry, and most of it will be seen or described at some point, with some little pieces of the jigsaw left to be inferred.

MARVEL: This is the first major crossover you've helmed at Marvel. Can you describe the experience?

MC: Well, I was heavily involved in Messiah Complex and Second Coming, too – but yeah, this time I get the whole toybox. It's an incredible feeling: a feeling of gathering momentum that's had editor Daniel Ketchum and I laughing slightly crazed laughs at each other over the phone. "We're gonna be able to do that? Okay, that's totally fantastic! Wait, BY WHEN???" The great thing is just being completely in control of all the story beats. It's a different kind of pleasure from the adrenaline-charged baton-passing of a crossover like Second Coming, with four creative teams and a weekly schedule. Seriously, I can't remember the last time I got this big a kick out of a single story.

MARVEL: Finally, let's talk Clay Mann designs. What makes him so perfect for this story?

MC: Clay's just amazing at coming up with the right visuals to embody and define this world. Right from the start, his character sketches just left me ecstatic. They not only gave me what I was asking for, but played off the central ideas of the story in spectacular and inspired ways. You look at these people and you want to know who they are and what their stories are. Plus, he gets the sense of huge scale, effortlessly. And I'm going to go out on a limb and say that he and Steve Kurth make for a great team-up: different styles, but beautifully complementary.